

Split Lips

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Split Lips

by [venus43](#)

Summary

But still, after a while it gets boring, as most things do. Meaningless fights between unnamed men were never going to enthrall George, he's far too spry. The only way he'd really care was if he had a name to put to a face, a smile to put with a body. So that's what he seeks out, why he binds the front of house with fake laughs and high praise just to get to the backroom with the rest of the scum that don't know how to live.

or, dream is a boxer and george has too much money

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

The bite of London never changes.

For the most part, it's safe—guarded by the feared only for the vulnerable to roam down darkened streets and check into the expensive hotels that line the Thames with no real worry, but those same poorly lit streets talk, and when they do, it's never pleasant.

When they do, it's mortal.

The side of London that George knows is ever-changing, it's desperate and gripping and for a well-educated lad it'll surely be his downfall, but despite the terror that London can hold, the excitement

will never change. Even if he's in far over his head and doesn't know as much about the world as he pretends to.

Busy clubs are mere pastimes and education comes second to thrill; so when George finds the one thing that can keep his interest long enough to claim it, he dives headfirst with a full wallet and only daddy's money to spend.

The club is dirty, and immoral, and definitely not legal, but the businessmen lining the floors never care—they're too busy losing money to give a shit. And although they share the same suits and smiles, George isn't like the rest of them, he's far too smart to be placing bets on people that won't make it worth his while.

When other men stand strong, George leans across his barrier with a smirk—watching sweaty bodies fight with a glass in his hand and raised eyebrows as he mutters his bets to whoever's next to him, asking them to put down money just between the two of them alongside the bills they gave to the house. George's charm is his only real weapon.

But still, after a while it gets boring, as most things do. Meaningless fights between unnamed men were never going to enthrall George, he's far too spry. The only way he'd really care was if he had a name to put to a face, a smile to put with a body. So that's what he seeks out, why he binds the front of house with fake laughs and high praise just to get to the backroom with the rest of the scum that don't know how to live.

The club before night is different—quieter—and George stands atop a wooden staircase with painted hands pressed firmly into the pockets of a suit, crisp black being shrouded in dust as he lies against the grime of a brick wall. There's no one in the ring, only men and chatter, disconnected and frivolous as the fighters stand in a disorderly line ahead. Each and every one, all sizing up the others around him while finding the wealthiest in the room just to get in their good books. Although it's not obvious from the way he rolls his eyes and holds himself reckless, George knows he should be the one they're looking for, begging to know, in secret.

Maybe they're just bets, someone for George to pamper and splurge on in the hopes they give a good fight at the end of the day, but the way they all stand tall with bandaged knuckles and easy grins is still disjointed, enough for George to question his own meaning.

He's careful not to touch the banister on the way down the stairs, the fear of catching something incurable far larger than the urge to look at home. But in reality, George could never blend in well here, he's far too proper to ever really get into the scene.

Eye contact drags against the line, stern looks being met with a small huff, and as he roams and stares and tries to find the best competitor, a single look throws him into the stir he's needed.

One man, certainly not the tallest or the strongest, but a cocky smile has always been somewhat of an anchor for George, something to misguidedly love even though it's not earned. The other men are stagnant, dull, and honestly never stood a chance at pulling his attention, but he'll never tell them that, they can still believe they'll win his wallet.

There's a businessman on a stool, wrapped in close conversation with someone similar to himself. George stands by the side, alone. Perhaps it's obvious that this is his first time back here, seeing the inner workings of the club, where they rig matches to hell and back and never give the people out front a proper chance, but it's not as though he'll let it stop him, and before George knows it he's taking a stride forwards, shaking hands and introducing himself to a guy he'd never usually speak to.

“Hi,” he chirps, sickly sweet saccharine dripping from his tongue to land in the dust that lines the floorboards.

A flinch tells him everything. The way men recoil and shoot looks that are in no way discreet to each other tells George all he needs to know. There’s no fitting in, not when his suit is pinched tighter than others and his smile is so broad that the dim light can only catch it, but faking it is quintessential and George is a master of the arts that truly matter.

“God, the weather is dreadful,” he converses, simple, plain, continuing despite the chill. “I almost thought I’d be too late to make my pick.”

Unamusement is evident. The rich are never polite.

“And you are?” the seated man asks, an eyebrow raised in feigned indifference.

“Oh.” A hand on his chest, George knows the game and he plays it well. “I’m George.” Push a hand forwards, bat umber eyes and throw a smile that isn’t real. “Davidson. George Davidson.”

“As in..?”

“Yes,” George pretends to laugh, light, airy, pretending it’s funny because it almost is. “Those Davidson’s. You’ve probably heard of my father.”

It’s almost comical, how quickly George’s hand is taken, shook vigorously and not dropped until he knocks it off. “Well it’s a pleasure to meet you,” the man rushes, stumbling over his words as he begs for approval with desperate eyes. “I’m Will, my friend here’s called Jack. Pleasure to meet you.”

“All the same to you,” George smiles.

He knows these men like the back of his hand. They’re the underclawings of the middle class; the everyday fellow with suits tailored enough to fit but not smart enough to dine in. A distaste for this type of man is something that was engraved into the teachings of George’s first school and his only ever job, but he was also taught to hate the ones that work underground, dodging the law and dealing dirty money, yet here he is—so, in pure honesty, George doesn’t have much room to judge.

“So,” he starts, clearing his throat with a cough. “Mind helping me get to grips with this place?”

“Not at all,” Will says. “It’s simple, really. You pick a fighter, maybe talk with them for a second, then you give your money to the back.”

Through thick and thin, a stare is pointed in George’s direction, not from businessmen or dying workers or even the owners, but from an unsteady line of muscle and strength. Though dangerous, he can’t help but look back.

This man is different, interesting. His hair is blond and his skin is tan, ashy white in splotches while sharp teeth poke out from plump lips to form a smile that’s nothing less than hazardous. He’s attractive—conventionally—and in secrecy almost everyone here will be like George, favouring rugged lines over soft curves even if they’ll never be allowed to voice that want from the fear of being ostracised; this side of London is known best for its scene.

So George doesn’t feel too bad about looking back.

He didn’t come here for sex but he definitely wouldn’t mind getting it from a guy that’s already eye-fucking him.

Perhaps it's just a marketing tactic, a way for George to be roped in while robbed blind, but George is smart, and even if cockiness in a slightly tilted stance has caught his attention, he won't be dumb enough to do anything he could regret.

Then again, hushed smiles are still smiles.

"I can pick anyone?"

"Yeah," Will says, angling a glass in the other's direction like he's telling a tip that only the best know, like George should be grateful to him for meaningless eternity. "The guys with the most bets have the least pay off, but that way you'll know you're safe."

"Hm," George thinks aloud. It's an invitation for Will to keep speaking before he gets bored.

"The more you give, the better they play. And if you're really about it, slip some extra to your guy, it'll really help with..." A pause—raising eyebrows with dark intention. Will pretends that he and George have been lifelong friends because his father probably taught him that in order to move up in life you need to befriend the rich. And a Davidson is as rich as it gets. "...Motivation."

"I see," George mumbles. His eyes are on blondie in the corner. His stare is being returned, tenfold. "Any top picks?"

"We all have favourites," Will tells him, most likely noticing the way George's eyesight drifts. "Go for muscles, not charm."

It's useless advice. He'll thank the kindness with an invite to dinner or something small and charitable later. For now, George simply looks to tall and blond in the corner.

He wonders how long he's worked here for. If he always dreamed of being a cage fighter—boxer, in fact—in the pits of London at a club that likely doesn't pay well. Surely, that's no one's fantasy. It's fucked in a sense. But stories are fascinating and George is so sure that the boxer whose name he doesn't quite know has a thousand tales that he hasn't found the right ears to tell.

"I quite like charm," he mumbles. "It's intriguing."

There's no lie to his tone. The men in private school are uptight, attractive possibly, but not brash and wanton in the way an enigma is. In private education, George had sex in secret—in expensive hotel rooms while being layed out over silk sheets, treat perfectly because the last thing they'd want is for George to go blabbing to his father about a guy that didn't love him right.

But here, no one knows his father unless he blurts out the name. And this guy is different anyway, he wouldn't hold George like a princess or kiss him soft with cloud and honey. No. He's dirt and he's fascinating. He'd use George like it's his last day on earth.

Thoughts can roam while high cheeks pinken. George lets his eyes dip down a strong chest before curving back up, showing his interest with the illusion of just scouting out potential. The man is almost salvageable, George could be perfect for him.

The thoughts start to echo and soon enough George is hooked, leaning further towards Will like he needs to ask something that no one else can ever hear. He wants to know everything, can see the future from just a few subtle glances. "And who's that?"

"Dream," Will whispers, close to the shell of George's ear and heavy under subtle breaths. "I wouldn't bet on him if I were you, he's more bark than bite."

Half a laugh. “How so?”

“He’s arrogant. It’s nauseating.” Will speaks as though he’s seen it before. “He’ll talk a big game but no one’s ever seen him deliver. Not worth your time.”

“Dream,” George mumbles. He’s testing the name on his own tongue and the way he rolls the word feels like danger itself.

Arrogance is a trait that everyone in his world holds. George pulls on the front of his suit as if to air himself out, wondering how far charm can be misinterpreted or if every class of every man holds their own bubble of self-importance—not just the high end pricks that George has made himself familiar with.

But in a scene like this, arrogance can’t be awful. When George looks at *Dream* he sees a lean figure and strong arms, an expression that says he’s sure in himself so other people should be too. He’s never seen him fight, if he had, George would remember, but he knows he’s good. He has to be.

“You’re not actually thinking about it are you?”

“Maybe I am.” George shrugs. He’s all smiles when it comes to this. It’s a rush, nothing less, nothing more. “That’s what we’re here for anyway, a little risk.”

“A little risk isn’t debt.”

“Funny,” George grins, one glance to the line and one glance back, Will stares at him with raised eyebrows the whole way. “I’m going to go talk to him.”

And in a shitty club, the lights are dark. It’s two overhead bars, running from one side of the open area to the other, the ring (the focal point) the only thing shrouded in proper light. Under these conditions, George must shine. Because he doesn’t let the grim reality of his surroundings get to him. He’s high on excitement and money, and all the things his father used to hide from him, so it’s no wonder that the regulars stare and the line of fighters—including Dream—all look along too.

Quick movements mean that George is walking.

Suit pants are melded to his body, making slight sound as he walks from tables and grace to fighters and brawn. It’s a line and George walks along it, his biggest smile on his face like this is all just some fun game to him—in a way it is. A game of chess except all of his knights are real, with blood and flesh and likely broken families that they’ll return to in an unkempt state.

In the absence of morality, George can’t find it in himself to care.

Most men don’t look George in the eyes. They stare right above his head, acting as though he has some form of superiority over them. And quite frankly it’s stifling—he’s not that different. Still, George moves along.

He sees confidence in his periphery. It’s a feature that doesn’t have to be exclaimed. George knows he’s being stared down by aventurine eyes and he can’t help but look up and match the stare.

Attractive people make morally wrong things almost feel right.

“Hello,” George starts. He’s stopped at the end of the line, unabashedly staring at a bare chest without the care for who around them can see. And he jokes, because charm is everything, even if it lands on deaf ears. “It’s a little cold to be wearing that, don’t you think?”

Dream shrugs, cocky as he blows air through his nose in what's almost a laugh. "I don't get cold."

American. George likes that.

There's an air of haughtiness to a singular stance. In public, George was taught to hide his preferences, in case one of his father's business competitors had hired a reporter to track his every movement and publish it all to the tabloids. Now however, he doesn't particularly care. Wave a stack of tens in front of someone and they'll surely drop all knowledge. George has only done it a few times.

He smiles with his teeth, flashing ivory and charm and letting Dream's eyes linger on the movement. "Everyone gets cold."

"Not me," Dream says. "Do you have a name?"

"George."

A hand is pushed forward. It's a grip stronger than the other's had. Dream almost tugs George forwards when he shakes and flexes his strength just to make a point. If they weren't in the presence of everyone else then George would have more to say about the whole situation, maybe something to do with how Dream blends into ashy surroundings like he's becoming second to the life he leads.

But he has class, and at the end of the day, trying to bed someone he's barely met doesn't entirely reflect upon that.

"Do you want to know my name?"

"No," George shrugs. He knows how it sounds, but he's always been a bit of a tease. "I've heard about you."

A dirty smile, practically a smirk. Dream is attractive and he knows it. "Are you looking to place a bet?"

"Maybe," George chirps. "Have you got many offers?"

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

"I would," George deadpans. "That's why I asked."

The way that Dream smiles is dirty. He hangs his head low, shoots a look to the guy standing next to him that's busied himself by making light conversation with another. And when he looks back to George there's a glint in his eye, one that could probably be mistaken for intrigue if it weren't for George's higher understanding.

"Well George, I may have a few offers but I'm willing to hear yours out," Dream says like he's throwing him a bone. "If you have one?"

George definitely has an offer.

His movements are almost nervous as he lifts his arm, eyes tracing over tan skin and wondering if this would be a step too far, give the owners a bad impression especially considering the fact he already bribed his way in here. But when Dream sees what George seems to be doing he doesn't stop him, allowing gentle fingers to come up to rest on his arm and trace over the linings of muscle.

Dream is *strong*. George half-forgets how to breathe when he looks up through his eyelashes and pretends that boxers and blood isn't the thing that gets him going—just how rough it is when they're ragging each other about under the eyes of countless others.

His father always taught him confidence. Standing on a dirt floor with morals that shake each time he takes a breath, is not the first time that George has had to apply that knowledge. Still, Dream is looking at him back and under different circumstances, George would have had him by now. But as things are, the only thing that he can do to make a lasting impression is bet big and show the other that he isn't just talk—that he can make this worthwhile all while sneaking a few unabashed glances.

“Two thousand.”

His voice isn't low when he says it; the others around must hear his offer.

“What?”

Dream doesn't seem to believe it.

“Two thousand for you to play and win,” George states. “And an extra few hundred if you make a show.”

“You're kidding.”

“No,” George laughs, scoffing at the other's expression.

He has the money to spend so why not make a point of it? Sanded down smiles and the glint of dirty light in black pupils; George's nails only just scrape over the skin on Dream's arms to remind the other that this is so very real. Dream's charm flickers for half a second, showing pure confusion, maybe reluctance, before he manages to force the smirk back onto his features, confidence incarnate.

“Well, that's an unusually high bet,” Dream shrugs. He doesn't knock George's hand away, just moves to cross his arms in front of his chest with a cocksure stance. “You'd have to be mad to think it'll be worthwhile.”

“I'm not mad,” George says. “Just lucky.”

“I don't even think they take anything over a grand,” Dream tells him. “They'd have to pay you back too much.”

And that George knows. He's been in a room with the owners far too many times, sipping from a tall glass while he's told it isn't wise to put so much money down in one go—still, he always manages to get out of it. It's a wonder how far a cheque for repairs and a father that knows the head of the police department can get a man.

“I'll figure that out,” he tips, a coy glance and a retreating hand. Don't touch too much, it'll make him look desperate, more so than he is. “Will you take the offer?”

Even if they don't know him by name, everyone here has heard of the guy in the wings that splurges on the best looking fighters. The one that never turns up on time, is always a couple of minutes late just to kick someone off of a seat with a five in the palm of their hand. They've heard of how George pays well, and how he never speaks of who he's put money on except to the guys that sit so close they're almost breathing on him. To them, he's a mystery. Here he's almost see-through.

Everyone knows that George loves it when eyes manage to shift from the well-lit ring to the angles of his face. He laps up attention like it's handcrafted just for him, but even with that knowledge, no one has been bold enough to flirt.

"You're pretty, y'know that George?"

Dream holds surety in the restraints of his tone, letting George know his thoughts with just a stare and the way an eyebrow raises with the corners of a smirk.

George doesn't let him see the effect. He knows this game, plays it well. "I've been told."

Finding romance in the filth of a club like this isn't ideal. Sometimes, George hates himself for the things he likes, the broken, the wanting, and he curses his upbringing for leading him straight here—to danger, to fun, and to all the things that men like him shouldn't find themselves wrapped up in.

But without that, he wouldn't know excitement, rush. London may not be perfect but it sure knows how to give George the thrills he loves most. So, he's more than willing to throw down a bit of extra money just to stir some trouble. He knows that it won't hurt him in the long run. The family fortune isn't going anywhere, that wealth is generational, George will be bathing in hundreds and laughing with pearls around his neck for the rest of his life.

Dream doesn't have that liberty.

"Have you also been told that you're quite dumb?" He asks, looking down at George as though he's beneath him, dirt on the sole of his shoe despite the fact that right now, George owns him.

Still, a laugh. "Only a few times."

Everlasting, the rustling of material as suits shifts and voices talk. Another man is being bet on as they speak, likely Dream's competitor in a fight that's sure to happen if they both accept what's offered. In places like this, George should feel scared. He isn't strong enough to hold his own, Dream could overpower him and bust his jaw within seconds, spitting on him for thinking he can just bat his eyelashes and throw money at every situation he's in.

The sickest part of George might just like that.

But George can see that Dream is interested—he's smiling to himself and trying not to let it be seen. Thinking. One. Two. Until thoughts are the loudest thing in the room and mild chatter is just that, mild. In front of Dream, behind the ring, George glances down to his watch with a feeble attempt to seem in control, like he didn't choose the guy that was eye-fucking him just because he thought it might be fun to have a fling with a boxer.

"What made you bet on me?" Dream asks eventually. He sounds genuine, curious.

"Well you were practically begging for my attention," George starts.

"Was I?"

George raises an eyebrow. "Are you trying to tell me you weren't?"

"No, not at all," Dream chuckles. The way he stands makes George feel small, arms crossed and jaw angled down. There's no telling how Dream recounts the moment they met eyes, how dark looks and saccharine glances could be interpreted in another mind, but George knows what he's thinking. Dreams grinning wide enough for the sharp canines to show. "I'm just glad you noticed."

“Well, I’ll be glad once you win,” George breathes, sighing. “You will win, right Dream?”

“C’mon baby.” Dream has probably done this a thousand times—subtle flirting with the guests to make sure he gets the best bets. Still, George likes to think he’s special, that when Dream chuckles and looks at him with dark eyes he means it, wants George spread out in front of him in the same way George does. His voice is rugged and his infliction is purposeful. “I always win.”

The fight is brutal.

Dream isn't the first one to throw a punch—no—instead his opponent is the one to hit the starting blow. A hard punch skimming light across Dream's jaw with the intent to hurt, injure.

George is sat in the wings amongst the many. He reacts with them all, wincing slightly before leaning forwards to gauge just how badly this might go. Throughout the whole fight, he still holds a small smile on his face, forced to make the guys around him think he really knows what he’s looking at.

By the second round, Dream is bleeding. It’s not that bad, just a nosebleed, but the lights and the cheer make it seem that much more detrimental, like George has made a grave mistake by just trusting a guy he thought was hot to hold himself well in the ring too.

The last punch is awful.

George doesn’t know too much about boxing. He doesn’t know how the point system works, or the way a person is graded—he doesn’t even know how many rounds there are. But what he does know, is that when Dream finally swings his arm and the guy in front of him falls to the floor for a count of ten—one, two, three, out cold while Dream’s team act like animals in the pit—is that when George goes home he’ll go home with double his money, that and the knowledge that he’s found his fighter.

There are too many matches for George to really count.

He bets on Dream three times. Once that very first time, the second on a match against some guy twice his size, and the third on one night that Dream had personally told George to attend—said it would be worth his while.

And it was.

Of course, there are other fights that George goes to see, but the ones with Dream are by far the best. Those ones, he knows he’ll make a profit, because not only is Dream attractive, but he can throw and take a punch like no one else in the whole club. The other guys were idiots for doubting him, that’s what George thinks, because why on earth wouldn’t they bet on Dream? He’s great at what he does and he looks good doing it—it’s the perfect deal.

At a certain point, George moves up in the world. The money he puts down gets him transferred

from the wings with the rest of the scum to a large box that's slightly higher and looks down at the ring below, more secluded with only a few others, some of which he recognises from the first choosing.

The floorboards are still dirty, moulded with green and gnawed through by countless bugs and creatures, but at least here the glasses are slightly cleaner, not rimmed with dust when George presses bitten red lips to the side and takes a sip.

“Good fight,” he says to Dream when he catches him in the locker room.

Dream made sure to show him around, pretending his eyes weren't running down George's back when he'd shown him the grime infested showers with the note that no one ever comes in.

It's almost comfortable—definitely not a routine for George to get used to and lose interest in, but it's fun, simple, and the way that Dream looks dropping down from the ring, with sweat on his skin and a cocky smile on his face, makes it a thousand times more captivating.

They talk briefly after every fight, George thanking Dream for the show and slipping him a couple of bills with a quiet, “Here you go.”

Only for Dream to return with an even more hushed, “Thanks darling.”

One time, George stays back a little later.

The day is long and Dream's fight started at 10, lasting for around 30 minutes before the referee cut into the ring and pushed two bodies apart, blood on Dream's gloves and anger in flurried reds on the other man's face.

It was an amazing night from start to finish, and George knows he'll be riding that high for days to come, in the backrooms, in the pits, when he goes to sleep and remembers how Dream stopped and looked up in his direction, a chaste kiss to his gloves that was pointed to the sky.

It's routine for George to retreat, mingle with a few of the more established men before dropping down into the midst of it all for less than a second, only there to give Dream the extra money he's come to know and pass through a few of the more flirtatious comments of the night, maybe pretend they can be more. But routine is boring and George wants to see it all—have more than just a short talk with the man that's making him even richer.

So he passes the talent down below, drops down wooden steps slow enough to find the attention of everyone that's struggling to live. And even with gold on his wrist and silver trimmings to the pockets of his suit, every man—including the ones with dirt on their faces and blacks to the corners of their teeth—all look at him as though he's scum, the lowest of the low, glimmering with the most hated qualities despite being one of the most cultivated in London.

Perhaps George can understand the glances. They live different lives after all, breathe different air, sit in different wings of the same hospital when they go to visit with mirrored injuries. But that's not George's fault, he was born into wealth, there's simply no changing that.

Walking quickly means he can pretend not to see judgement. George prays to god that Dream will be the only one in the locker rooms at this time.

When he finds the door he hovers for half a second, breathing deep just to regain some poise and force on the face that Dream knows best, but it all turns to shit when he tilts his head and takes a step, coming face to face with a sight of two and not one.

Dream's grin is blinding. The medic looks less than pleased to be there.

"George," Dream exclaims, throwing his hands up with a wince when he realises the strength that it takes. Quite frankly, he looks awful; there are bruises on his chest and gashes on his sides, blood being blotted away with a small paper towel as he holds it to his nose and tries not to let it fall on his split lip. George would be lying if he said it isn't the least bit attractive.

"You can leave," he says to the medic, offhanded. George doesn't even look at him, doesn't have to.

"But I'm—"

"I've got it," George reassures, pulling a note from his wallet to wave it in the air. "Just leave the kit."

It's probably a fifty, maybe a hundred, George doesn't care enough to look, so he simply lets the medic take the note and directs his full attention to Dream, raising an angled eyebrow with the dust rising in the room.

Bare-chested and still slightly sweaty, Dream sits in front of him as though he hasn't just taken a beating.

"You really walk around with that much money on you?" He asks, concerned.

George nods. "You wouldn't rob me, right?"

There's something familiar about the way they talk, even if they haven't known each other forever, Dream isn't afraid to make George feel bad, slightly embarrassed for carrying around half a bank account in his wallet. And that's interesting, unnatural, he almost wants to know how comfortable they could be if they knew each other a little longer.

George hides a smile when he steps closer. This is purely a business affair. He's just come to check on his most successful fighter, that's it.

It's not like they're friends—George doesn't have friends, with his sort of wealth he can't.

"That was bad," George comments, unable to stop his eyes from trailing over Dream's skin, looking at battered blues and dulled purples. It shouldn't be hot but it is. Dream, covered in marks that George's lips could rival in darkness, is inviting, alluring. And George loves being able to ogle in private, without ten other men surrounding him and asking how long it'll take before Dream finally loses a match, because now he can really stare, wonder how tan skin would feel pressed up against his.

His train of thought must be obvious because Dream makes sure to shake away all fears.

"I've had worse," he says, purposefully dragging sharp fingertips over the slopes of his body, begging for George to watch and see each imperfection, dotted freckle and brown mole.

This is George's weakness. Men like Dream are always the most captivating.

"Oh really?"

"Yeah," Dream grins, an expression that screams how badly he wants to tell. "This," he starts, pointing to a healed wound on his side, one with red edges and the most ghastly appearance; George can't help but grimace upon looking at it. "I swear the guy put metal in his gloves or

something, fucked me up for weeks.”

“Shit.”

There’s a huff in response, nodding from Dream as though he’s braved it and now only has to deal with the scar.

He welcomes George forward, opening his arms as if to tell him he doesn’t have to stand in the doorway and is perfectly free to take a seat on the bench beside him, next to the straight blue lines of every locker.

“You kicked out the medic,” Dream comments. “Are you at least going to bandage my hands?”

George glances down at red knuckles and sandy blond hair. Perhaps he could help. He wouldn’t mind getting a tad closer to Dream anyway, feeling like he’s needed.

“Do I look like I know how to tie a bandage?” He says though, indignant.

Dust lines the benches, second only to grime and the filth of the many men that have sat there before. And it’s disgusting that Dream can sit without the slightest of nausea on his face, but there are no other benches in availability so George just has to suck it up and let his suit be moulded with ashen filth.

“No,” Dream says. He passes George the kit, leaning back with his body on display. “You can try though.”

Dream’s hand is bigger than his, fitting so snug in his grip when he rubs his thumb over cut knuckles and falters at the way Dream really winces. Like to him this isn’t just a fun game, it’s his body’s state and his pure health on the line.

Every fight ends with him bloody, battered and ruined and so incredibly hurt, but he doesn’t stop. If he thought less into it, George would assume that Dream likes the pain.

Although watching the fights feels amazing, being in the back is less so. Still, George loves to see the action—this is something he’ll never get enough of. It’s all consuming and ridiculously intoxicating; he adores the gripping thrill even though he shouldn’t.

He makes Dream sit in silence as he practices the first aid he learnt when he was 18—given the money to fly to France and have a minor fling with a fireman from a small, small town in the Alps where he watched him give CPR and pretended he cared about the career path.

There’s a possibility that George sits a little too close and acts as though he doesn’t notice when a large hand comes to rest on his thigh. There’s also a possibility that he likes the feeling. He’ll never say that out loud though—flirting with Dream is simply a trivial thing that’ll be over within weeks, when they finally fuck and realise they want nothing to do with each other.

Still, it’s all coy smiles and barely hidden glances.

Dream stares at George through his eyelashes, looking down at his lap while watching the other press plasters against his chest like they’re a renewable source. Pale skin grows hot and pink is practically glued to the heights of George’s cheeks—Dream’s too if he looks deep enough, and for a singular moment, Dream is more than just attractive, he’s compelling.

That’s more dangerous than anything else.

Upon leaving, George slips Dream a fifty-pound note. Their relationship is transactional, that's it.

"Where are you going?" George's father asks one night.

In the doorframe, George pulls his coat a little tighter, covering up business attire with something that only just meets his knees, tailored too. It's not the first time he's snuck out to watch Dream throw a couple of punches, it seems he spends far more time at the club than his own house nowadays, but it's the first time he's been caught.

The door to his father's study is open. In a chair with armrests, he drapes himself across his desk and his papers and raises an eyebrow in indiscreet question.

"Oh," George shrugs. "Nowhere."

"You staying out of trouble?"

And it's a smile, like that much is obvious, like there's no possible way for someone like George to be running around getting in trouble in a place as dark as London. So he shakes his head as though he's been planning a church-run, or charity work, not to go stand with shit-faced men in the booth of a boxing club to watch a guy that he's half-attracted to stand bloody as he beats up someone else.

Lying gets George everywhere.

"Of course."

Sharp eyes flick to the clock on the wall as it runs past 11. The nightlife in London only really exists underground.

"Be back before one."

The next time that George goes to choose a fighter, he knows exactly what he's doing.

He shows up late, as always, in a suit that fits him perfectly with gold trimmings and rolled sleeves. And by now he has 'friends' so to speak, otherwise known as the men that aren't quite as rich as him but think they can climb their way to success by dragging on his arms and climbing that indiscernible social tower, so he gets a warm welcome; all tipped glasses and knowing smiles.

Dream is by the ring, leaning against the box with crossed hands and a cunning smile. He knows what George has come for so he doesn't bother with flash, still, it doesn't seem as though he's let go of any charm. Sandy blond hair is pushed back to avoid his eyes, green, piercing and riddled with black. It's a one-way walk, George lets his feet lead the way, ignoring the calls of the rich nobodies that want to see him suffer.

He has a question to ask anyway, one that's meant for a more personal gain than competition.

“You going to pick me again?” Dream asks when he gets a bit closer. Ivory teeth clip the pink of his lower lip, sharp and angled as he smiles with acidity.

“You haven’t let me down yet.”

This is an alliance that could last them both to the ends of their lives. Humanity is sickness and George enjoys being able to watch a man he's bought beat the shit out of another while the rich all cheer, that's sick, disgusting. But Dream must love it and so does he.

The next step is quite obviously to ask for more.

“You intrigue me, Dream,” George starts.

He steps to the side, let's himself be followed so as to not attract the attention of everyone in the vicinity, and he may not know the place like the back of his hand but George has a certain knack for finding seclusion in the busiest of areas.

“I intrigue everyone,” Dream drawls, unwavering. “What’s your point?”

“It means I’ve seen you so many times and I still don’t know who you are.”

George has seen skin and brawn, plasters stuck over bruises that will never really heal, there has to be something deeper, but he’s only ever seen Dream’s expression in one note—confidence. It’s a nice front, George wouldn’t mind if he only ever got to see that face, but when he walked in he came with poise, assured in the fact he’ll at least ask for more before it’s over.

There’s a smile that George is hooked on, a cock of the head that makes Dream the slightest bit more attractive.

“So?”

George’s voice is solid. He knows what he wants and Dream wants it too. “Lunch tomorrow, at the Ritz.”

“Oh sweetheart,” Dream says almost immediately. “I don’t think that’s wise.”

And in actuality, there’s truth to his statement. It’s not smart to get involved with the guy he’s relying on to keep him rich, George has thought that over and decided he’s never been smart outside the classroom anyway. And it’s not like he wants to be Dream’s *boyfriend*; George doesn’t do boyfriends, he doesn’t think that Dream would be too up for that either, so asking Dream out is purely for a bit more fun, to learn a little more about each other while acting like he serves a major part in everyone he’s even known’s lives.

“Neither do I.” George shrugs. Their eyes meet in flames, red. “Come anyway.”

“I don’t think they’d let me in,” Dream protests.

Even if he’s taller than George and a thousand times stronger, he has to keep some restraint in his tone, needs to appeal to the subtle smiles that George loves to be showered in.

“You’ll be with me,” George explains, huffing out a laugh when he says, “Money gets you everywhere, Dream.”

“Such dirty words from such a pretty face,” Dream chastises—closer, nearer, George could lean forward and touch the spot where his collarbones dip and his neck hollows out. “I bet you want to

know how far money could get you with me.”

“Would you give me an answer?”

“Desperate little thing,” Dream tuts. “It’s strictly business with our guests anyway. As much as you want to wine and dine me I don’t think we can do that, baby.”

But George is strong and George is rich. He gets what he wants and doesn't have to bother with the hassle of pitiful rules.

“Then we can have a business talk,” George decides. There’s a slip of paper in his pocket, a pen which he takes out to scribble down a few words and shove them into Dream’s hands before stalking off. “Here’s the address of where we can meet. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Design and elegance.

The Ritz is gorgeous.

It's not George's favourite spot in London, no, with the dress code and the stuffy red décor, it's definitely second to the rush of the underground. But it's a nice place, classy at the very least.

In a gold seat, Dream casts his shadow over the floor, glowering at George while he takes a sip from a glass of water.

“I can’t believe I have to wear this thing,” he mutters, bitter and picking at the buttons on his blazer.

The suit is navy blue, black striking through the darkest patches, and it fits snug around the swell of Dream's arms, accentuating his every movement when he grumbles and tries to figure out which cutlery to use.

“It’s a dress code,” George smiles. “Not my fault.”

Perhaps he should have told Dream about that dress code earlier, not dragged him into the nearest boutique shop as soon as he'd seen the other show up in a white shirt and some baggy jeans instead of formal attire.

And the suit was paid for by George's willing wallet, under the condition that he was allowed to pick the colour and the fit, request for the sleeves to be pulled a bit tighter in the five minutes they had before their reservation.

“You look really good in that suit though,” George comments. His glass is tall, slender fingers curving around the rise. “I like it more than your regular clothes.”

“You really know how to charm a guy,” Dream bites, clearly displeased.

He almost looks tense, a hand combing through the thick strands of his hair and tangling out knots so they form the smallest of curls. George's eyes follow the motion, tracking tension to the tables around.

“Calm down,” he reassures. Maybe George knows it's safe to flirt in a place like this, that nobody

cares and have likely heard it all before. But Dream doesn't. Wherever Dream lives, words as dulcet as these would likely get a guy in deep bother. "No one's listening. We're just having a business talk."

And it doesn't solve the problem but at the very least it makes Dream simmer, ashy grey tones running from his skin to make him look like a dead man walking, ghost pale until the warmth of a candlelit table works its magic.

They eat their first course with minor conversation. George tells Dream to stop looking so stressed and Dream finds his smile in George's eventual blush.

Deeper than work, not close enough for a real relationship. Somewhere vulnerable in between.

"This next fight I'm prepared to put down more than before," George starts, might as well pretend there's some severity to their tone. "You've impressed me."

"Of course I have," Dream laughs.

He plays with his fork, unimpressed with the way the cutlery shines from its careful clean.

"Can you promise me that you'll win?"

George knows the answer. Still, he likes to ask. That way he can see Dream grin, completely in his element as he brags about the thing he does best.

"Yes," Dream says, chin up, hair falling back. "You can count on me, sweetheart."

The pet name makes George stutter, an expression that he wipes off without falter so he can reply with the snark that Dream knows from him. "A mouth like that's going to get you in trouble."

This is almost flirting. "How so?"

"You know."

"What?" Dream chuckles. It's almost like he gains from getting a rise out of George, like this is tension and it's golden, tantalising. "Do you want something George? Because if you do, you're going to have to ask."

It's more than business, it has to be. Maybe it'll never be something properly together, George doesn't want to wake up to Dream's stupid fucking smirk every day, *god* who would want that? Because they're disgusting people, they're the lowest of the low, the only difference is when George goes home he can wash off his dirt and bathe until he's clean, while Dream is forced to fight and claims to enjoy each second of scarring.

George doesn't want to ask for what he wants. Dream already knows his thoughts. "I don't need to." He says it with an air of confidence, something that he can see Dream grimace at.

"I'm not your worker." Gritted teeth, annoyance played off with a single coy glance.

It's not true.

"I know," George lies. "But you're still mine." He takes a sip of his drink, holding it carefully and making sure to never look away from Dream's eyes. "To bet on, to own."

"I don't belong to you."

“You could though,” George offers.

He’d give Dream more than money could ever buy if given the chance, play it off as a business deal, maybe Dream would accept it that way. Because George doesn’t get told what to do, he gets what he wants, he wins everything he sets his mind on, because he’s irresistible—he’s rich and he’s awful and it feels amazing to be in the lead.

This isn’t a date, it could never be a date—dating outside of his class would be idiotic and George would never hear the end of it if news somehow got round to his father. But that doesn’t mean he’s not allowed to let his lips get loose and witness his own wanting eyes trail down to rest on Dream’s split lips.

Dream eats like a starving man. George wonders how much he can learn about the other in only an hour.

“How much money are you putting on me?” Dream asks at one point, spending all the time he can, watching George think.

“I was thinking five.” He says it like it’s nothing, nonchalant, shrugging. “Play nice and it might be six.”

Angled features tug up into confusion, a pretty face contorting in what could easily be read as anger. Dream’s words are punctuated with his scrutinising brand. “Ever think you might regret that?”

“No,” George confesses, because he doesn’t. He trusts that Dream will fight well because he’s seen it before and quite frankly it’s Dream’s pride on the line if he doesn’t put everything into it. George thinks he knows Dream well enough to say that pride means a great deal to him. To everyone. “Are you planning on making me?”

And Dream smirks, because he can’t resist. He’s a tease, and right now, even in a scene so unfamiliar, with suits and trained waiters that are meant to serve them like they’re royalty, he never stops being himself, proud and ridiculously attractive in navy blue. “I could make you do a lot, baby.”

George laughs. His eyes flick up, one glance at the table and the second on Dream’s being, attraction is futile. “You should wear suits more often—fits well.”

“I don’t like it,” Dream mutters. “Makes me feel like an asshole.” A pointed look, meant for everybody at once and especially the other. “A rich asshole.”

George hums. “The best kind.”

Eating is quick, lunch lasts for a little too long despite that fact.

They talk and they don’t get intimate, not getting too close because ideally they’re not fit for each other like that. Instead of the cute talks that George has had so many times with guys that only wanted to bed him to get close to his father, he and Dream, share vulgar words and stares that bore through the thinnest of clothing.

And in parting words, with a tie undone and begging to be thrown over his shoulder, Dream stares. He scoffs to no one but himself, refusing to let even George in on his little secret. It’s a bitter goodbye. The Ritz is gorgeous, George doesn’t come often so it’s safe to say he’ll miss candles and elegant decor, even if Dream won’t.

They stand on a busy street and lean against the back walls of a place that hasn't been cleaned in forever—one with dirt and grime and all of the things that George likes in privacy.

If anyone were to see them they might think they're normal.

"Don't spend so much money on me next time," is Dream's last statement. He says it so that George knows, piercing green eyes boring into umber tones. "It makes you look needy."

They don't talk for four days.

George's father gives him silence and ups his allowance on the promise of him not blowing it in a day on what he presumes to be horse racing. They don't speak unless it's necessary—George wouldn't have it any other way.

But he's not alone. Every day, he awaits Dream's next fight in unbridled anticipation. He's spending money like it grows on trees, throwing his humanity out of the window like it pains him to know he's still mortal. And it's beautiful, the motions of the rich, because they truly are untouchable, better than everyone else that hates their motivations although it does ostracise them just slightly, make every conversation more impactful because nobody really wants to be friends with the guys that solve all problems with wealth.

The dirt under George's fingernails never goes away, no matter how many times he washes his hands.

In the first round, Dream is winning.

It's gorgeous, two bodies wrapped in yellow lighting, red and blue and the flash of the crowds cheers. And one thing that George has noticed is that when Dream fights he puts his everything into it, moving and twisting and pushing himself into every one of his punches.

Usually he throws a bit in the first round. Dream will take a step back to analyse how his opponent plays, spending that first few minutes dodging while he figures out what to do. And then in that second round he'll finally start to play rough. George will lean forward in his seat, dropping the conversation he'd had with another in favour of putting a knowing smile on his lips and acting as though he's better than them all there—which he is, he just doesn't have to be so cocky about it.

The people in the best box will listen to George's quiet laughs, probably judging but they won't say a word. They'll offer him something complimentary before letting him watch the final round, where Dream always wins. When his opponent says they're out or the referee cuts in, or—George's personal favourite—when Dream throws a punch angled well enough for the competitor to lie flat on the ring floor for the quick counts of ten.

That's what George was expecting. An easy victory. Dream dicking around to give a good show before finalising that lead. But when the first round passes and Dream's shoulders start to sag, George can't understand what's going on.

Dream is easily double the size of his opponent, this match is on no accounts fair, but for some reason, Dream doesn't aim the punch that George knows he's capable of. He lets himself be hit and dodges into every punch shot, simply allowing himself to be thrown around the ring.

The jabs are weak, hitting a chest and then a stomach but Dream retreats after with a worn out expression that says he's doing his best. Unsurprisingly, George made sure to come in today talking big, bragging about how Dream has never let him down, so if there's one time where he wants for the ground to open up and swallow him whole then it's now.

Then the final round comes. Dream has been hit in the face; he's stumbling.

George watches with creases in the legs of his pants.

Dream's hit in the chest and George can see the effect, how he falls back against the ropes and hangs his head low. It'd all be fine if he threw a singular punch, but it's like there's an invisible force wrapped around Dream's limbs, stopping him from moving in any way that matters.

Thousands were put on this match. Thousands.

It trickles down the drain with each agonising second.

And the ref comes in when Dream is bloody, punch after punch being aimed at his face when he spits out black-red and lets it fall onto the mats. It seems as though he hesitates to break it up. He stops for a moment, watching what's going on as if to check if the beating is good enough. Dream's body is falling and his strength goes with it.

Then it's over, hands are being raised and Dream's not the one being lifted.

For a moment, George can't even process what's happened.

He lost.

Dream lost.

"What the fuck was that?" George scoffs.

It's hard to keep the bite out of his tone, and it may not be proper to show anger in such a public setting but he needs to ask.

The man next to him is sitting on a stool. George never learned his name. He was too busy ogling his fighter as he walked into the centre. "What was what?"

"Dream," George clarifies, airing his voice out as he sits back. "How the fuck did he lose?"

"Oh, you didn't know?" The guy says, grinning. It's like there's a secret that everyone but George is in on, like there's something happening that he'll never truly understand. And *god* does he feel like a fool, having to rely on someone that would probably work for him in any other scenario to clue him in on the things he wasn't told. The words are dark. The man's tone is cutting. "This one was rigged, he probably threw."

A solid glance. No emotion.

"How do you know that?"

"Over there." A point towards the darkest corners, where black casts its shadow on three people in suits as nice as George's. "He's being watched."

A quiet breath, George trying desperately to understand. Dream never told him he was taking bets from other people, he never told him that his loyalties lie somewhere else. The sound of chair legs scraping against the cold floor is loud, grating.

George has no business staying here anymore.

"Excuse me."

This is rage. This is anger and it's ugly.

This is the clicking of pointed leather shoes on cold slabs of grey stone. It's George's hands by his sides and his head pointed up in what could be misinterpreted as poise, a frown taped to pink pursed lips like there's no other expression his face has ever known.

And money is easy to replace—a bat of the eyelashes and a promise to be good gets George everything he wants. But pride is far different. Pride is finite and when George talks such a big game he doesn't expect to be left embarrassed in the stands of a shitty, shitty club.

The brushing of an expensive suit against the shoulders of countless strangers is unheard of, most of the scum in this place wear tatters to work and jeer dirt like it's a trophy. Exposing himself in riches is something George does often. On weekends he wears brand names, and in the privacy of his bedchambers he wears silk. Wealth is something to be proud of. And yet when George storms down linoleum floors, incurable disease on moulded wood that he touches despite risk, he doesn't feel proud at all.

He simply feels like one of the old fools that his father mocks at the dinner table. The ones that waste their money on cheap thrills with no real payoff.

Humiliation.

The owners are smiling because they know George just paid the building's rent and a mile more. Understandably, George isn't enthralled enough to return their waves or their laughs. Still, even in debt he has his charm, and George won't let his loss show for too much—replace that feeling for rage and they may see something they want instead.

He parts red seas and stands in darkness, dipping down a hallway with no lights so that there's no possibility of anger being spotted. And the locker room is so close and yet so far. George needs to find the time to throw false mirth on his expression even though in the end it'll be fruitless.

The locker room is loud. It's the busiest that George has seen it in aeons.

Thankfully most of the people have false class, they know their place and they certainly know to leave when George stands with a stark silhouette under the doorway. A Herculean task presented in front of him.

Dream sits on the bench, a medic tending to the worst wounds that George has seen in a while.

This is not the first time they've been here, staring, but it's the first time where George has had feelings that can't simmer, when he's mad and disgusted and fuelled by the drawl of mulberry tones. Dream's face is fucked up, quite frankly. He's bleeding from his forehead and his nose is likely out of place with the way red falls onto his lip and doesn't stop at his chin, staining his chest and every speck of skin in a clear path.

Cherry bruises are unforgivable, a pristine face twitches at the sight of these viridescent marks, and it might be harsh, because Dream definitely needs to be patched up, but George wants the medic

out of there now so he can have a conversation with the guy that's cheated him out of thousands upon thousands of pounds.

"Out."

This isn't their first encounter, now the medic leaves without a second question, passing Dream the cotton swabs he'd been blotting against his busted lip. He takes a ten from George's unwilling hands. The door is shut when he steps closer.

They're alone.

"You can't throw out the medic, I'm still bleeding," Dream protests, one hand thrown up as he smiles with scarlet lips.

It's mockery, laughing, bitter and so completely out of place.

"Oh, poor baby," George mutters. He can act like this doesn't kill him, like fury isn't wrapped in red around aching palms. Itching. Clawing. "Do you want me to help you out?"

Dream's still smirking. "If it's like last time, I definitely do."

So George steps forward. He sees damage and can't understand why Dream allowed himself to be hurt like this—torn to pieces and left bleeding with possible scars. He'll have a black eye tomorrow, a cut on his forehead and two across his lip, ones that'll get infected so easily if he doesn't get the right treatment.

But right now George doesn't think he'll be too helpful. His hands are shaking a bit too much for him to stay stable.

"That guy got you really good," he quips. Step closer, let sympathy bleed onto afflicted features, see if Dream will confess when George places a hesitant hand on his face and rubs over one of the lightest marks.

"Yeah," Dream huffs. "He was better than I expected."

He wraps his hand around George's wrist, tugs him that much closer like he deserves to even look at him.

"He was." George's tone grows cold. "Or you threw."

The moment that Dream realises is chilling. His whole body seems to freeze, his expression blanks, and George *knows* that he isn't feeling sorry for himself because that's just rich.

"What are you talking about?"

"You threw," George deadpans, standing up in full to tower over the other. This is his place, Dream should know his. "You just fucked me over."

And seconds are the institution for change—the foreground where Dream realises his mistake and pretends he's incapable of feeling bad. He replaces a blank face with tugged up eyebrows and a harsh scoff. Look to one side. Look away.

"Not my problem," he says although George knows he can't mean it. "I take the highest bid."

The highest bid.

The whole of London knows of George's family. They're the peak of wealth, the old money that the new businesses strive to one day be like. And his father is a dedicated man, perhaps not the kindest of souls, but dedicated. No one out-bids George. No one.

"And that wasn't me?"

The words come clawing out of Dream's throat like thorns. No cherry petals present to soften the blow. "No."

"It's always me," George exclaims.

"Well, this time it wasn't." Dream has blood drying on his chin. This is not what he stands for.

"And you couldn't have told me?" George asks, shoulders up, expression incredulous. "You made me look like an idiot."

"You're the one in an underground boxing ring, betting thousands on a guy you barely know," Dream rationalises, doing nothing more than making George angrier.

He gets silence for a moment. George steps back.

This is not how his nights go. The bite of the underground is meant to be fun, it's thrilling, excitement at its highest rate—it is not meant to be battered bruises and angry people, a guy throwing out his pride just because the pay rate is slightly higher. And in reality, George knows that one day they'll both be expected to settle down, find a job and forget about these past lies, but he's living in the present and thinking about that life is grim.

Dream shouldn't be doing this shit in the present when George is right there and giving out all he has.

"If I didn't take the bet, I wouldn't be walking, George." Dream isn't weak. He knows that. "I'd be out."

"So, you wasted my time and my money, all because you're a pussy," George scoffs.

Glowering, Dream is attractive.

He's still sweaty from the match, maybe he didn't exert himself in a way he normally would but he's still tired. And he shakes his head and lets the dirty blond strands of his hair fall down across his forehead before curling perfectly around his ears.

George lets himself be guided back by strong hands, two on his waist when they move to try and try to find a way for two bodies to shift from the bench to the middle of the room, just so Dream can regain the power by handling his height. Broad shoulders, imperfect posture.

"Yeah," he says, staring down at George. This isn't the time to be bold, Dream does it anyway. "You gonna kiss it better?"

"Really?" George scoffs. He can be vulgar as well, two can play at that game. "You want to fuck me?"

"*God*, don't be so crude," Dream mutters, turning to the side to look away.

Even if he pretends he's strong he's still nothing without George. George knows men like the back of his hand and Dream is no different to the countless others he's fucked in secret and known that

he'll be far safer than if push finally comes to shove and the most important people figure out the relations. George is allowed to be a bitch. Dream needs him.

"Loosen up, mutt," he taunts, one hand coming to wrap around the back of the other's neck. "Sodomy hasn't been a crime since the '60s."

"It's still enough of a reason to get fired," Dream bites.

George's nose scrunches up. "Not legally."

"Nothing here is legal."

And that George knows. He's not an idiot. He knows that this stuff isn't exactly fair, but that doesn't make it wrong per say. When he feels Dream's hands come up to touch his arms and his waist and whatever they're allowed to hover over, he's stricken—between two paths both that say he should hate Dream for business's sake while loving the tremor that lust forces through him.

"Y'know if you got caught for this you'd be in so much shit," Dream comments.

He knows how to distract. Unfortunately his tactics work.

"No I wouldn't," George scoffs. "Not when my father knows every lawyer in London and practically pays all their checks."

"You're disgusting," Dream chastises.

In a modern world this could be romance. That bleeding, aching want that makes George's breathing heavy when he watches Dream fight and wishes for that blood to mark him instead, when he wants to feel pain and have it exhaled softly against the dips of pale skin. This could be the dream, the goal.

They flirt despite risk; George can never get enough.

"You love it."

He sees the switch and Dream's eyes fall down. Green—chrome green—travels over freckle and dot, landing on George's lips and staring in hunger. Need, haste—at the end of the day they're all the same.

"What? You lost your fight and now you want to fuck me like you've actually won something," George bites, ridiculed. "I don't fuck runners-up."

"You do now," Dream smiles, boyish and brash. He leans down so the space between them gets smaller, testing. "Such a bitch."

"I think you need to remember who's paying your bills," George says.

"And I think you need to remember who's stronger out of the two of us."

An eyebrow raise. "Is that a threat?"

"It can be," Dream says. A pause. "If you want it to."

There's a turmoil in George's stomach. He doesn't want Dream to think he's off the hook, no, that'd be too easy. He needs Dream to understand that fucking with George could be the last thing he ever does. Nobody screws him over and gets away with it, but when it's self-sabotage that's

motivating him, it makes it so much worse.

So he keeps his charm and wears a smile that's so much more than dangerous, silently asking for Dream to come closer so he can spit fire in his bleeding eyes.

"Let's get this straight Dream," George starts, glaring because he's always been the one in power. "Without me, you're nothing. You'd be throwing matches every other day if I didn't know you, but I can go up to those stupid owners and bat my eyelashes, flash my credit card, and you'll never have to throw another match. Do you hear me?"

It's gritted teeth and a snarl instead of a smile. Dream looks as though he wants to rip George's throat out, addictive. "Yes."

"So are you going to apologise for making me lose so much money?" George asks, hand coming up to tangle through the strands of Dream's hair. "Be a good boy?"

He pulls softly, assertively.

"No."

Everything is useless. Two hands come to grab at his thighs, scooping George up so his feet are off the floor and his legs can be wrapped around Dream's waist. It's so quick he can't protest. Dream holds on so tight and manhandles him into submission, grinning the whole time while George grapples to find something to hold onto.

"The fuck?" he gasps, back being slammed against blue lockers, their hinges digging into his side. "*Dream.*"

"Such a fucking attitude," Dream snarls, pressing closer so their chests almost meet. "I know you're rich but you don't have to flaunt it like I owe you anything."

Scorn. George punches weakly at the other's body. "Put me down."

"Fine." Dream lets go almost immediately, leaving George to stumble as he's forced to find his footing. And he's trying to stand in full but before he can get there he's stopped, a rough shove on his shoulder as Dream pushes him to his knees. "Suck my dick."

"I'll bite it off," George threatens.

His head is spinning. The way he got here, slightly muffled in his mind. Perhaps this is something that he's wanted ever since he saw the other, except now it's real it's so much more pulling.

George can be a bitch about it but at the end of the day he and Dream were always going to get here, with the smell of rough, angry sex being the only thing that'll linger in this room for days.

"No," Dream shakes his head. "You won't. Not if you want me to keep on fighting."

And George knows that it isn't professional, that betting on a guy he's this infatuated with is surely the call for his demise. But he can feel the dirt of the floor scuffing suit pants, the grime against his fingertips when he steadies himself, and George knows that this is the rush he's been begging for—the one thing that isn't going to bore him now he's settling.

"Push my head down and I use my teeth," he promises.

Dream's grin is forever cocky.

Slender fingers dip into the top of his waistband, knuckles brushing against warm skin. George's eyes are trained firmly on a distinct V-line—the trail of few hairs that travel down when he starts to drag. He has to force himself not to stare and make Dream's ego inflate, because this sight might be gorgeous but he doesn't need to let the other know.

Both Dream's underwear and his shorts are between George's fingers, making it easy for him to pull them both down in one swift motion. It's quick and doesn't give him enough time to process, all George knows is that Dream's hands are in his hair and his jaw is hanging open.

Dream is big. That's the first thing.

It's not the biggest George has ever seen—he's watched porn, seen guys with cocks so big they'd hurt to touch. But Dream is definitely well endowed and George would be lying if he said he didn't want to know how it feels in his grip.

Tentative, he reaches to hold, letting Dream's shorts stay tight around his upper thighs.

It's only a loose grip; George wraps a hand around the base of his cock, no lube to smooth the motions, only the heat of skin on skin, a punishment of sorts.

On any other day he would tease, make Dream beg for him to finally use his mouth, but they've done enough talking and if George doesn't do this now then he may never get the opportunity—so he lets his jaw stay slack and brings the head of Dream's cock to the pink of his lips.

Just from the expression on the other's face, George knows he's good at what he does. He lets his tongue hang out, slowly guiding Dream into his mouth and taking what he can slowly. This type of tension makes everything else feel pathetic, the way they compete with their eyes to see just who will look away first.

In no world would Dream be a gentle lover. As soon as rough, calloused fingers are looped through the top of brown hair they tug, making George gag around Dream's cock and feel it twitch slightly in response.

He doesn't actually mind. Secretly he likes the rough treatment and the helplessness of it all, but to say it would be sin and George is far too focused on making Dream feel good to keep up his act. His lips are wrapped around the girth, Dream's cock stretching his mouth wide and causing a dull ache in his jaw.

It's heavy on his tongue, salty almost, and when George finally starts to move, letting his tongue pay attention to the underside, it almost feels wrong to say this is what he's been dreaming of every night.

What he can't take, he keeps his hand wrapped around, minimal strokes meeting his lips as he bobs his head and keeps his lips tight.

There are small noises leaving Dream's lips, muffled by the way he grits his teeth and does his best to not be heard. George does his best to sink his lips down lower, revelling in the way Dream's hands grasp onto his hair and beg to pull.

Hunger is in George's movements and he uses it to keep up a steady rhythm, hollowing his cheeks to make Dream tremble. He's getting hard, on his knees, in his suit, just from the weight and the taste, and in a moment he'll need to get off too—he just hopes that Dream will be kind enough to return this gesture.

"Feisty," Dream comments, the accidental scraping of teeth making his cock throb inside George's

mouth. "I like it rough."

A sting of pain flashes through George's mind when the roots of his hair are tugged. His hands clutch onto Dream's thighs, a desperate attempt to keep himself stable while Dream pushes his head down and makes him choke.

"I said don't push," he coughs, pulling back immediately.

Dream just shrugs. "You were going too slowly."

"I was being serious about biting," George snaps.

"And I was being serious about not caring," Dream replies, the fingers tangled in George's hair being used to pull him back onto his cock. "Now get on with it, brat."

And this time George doesn't have as much control. Dream fucks his face with no relent, aiming to make George choke and probe red, pitiful tears to fall from his eyes. It's arousal and it's ferocious and George knows that his voice will be hoarse tomorrow no matter what so he lets himself feel weak and for Dream to use him like he's nothing more than a cheap toy.

"*Fuck*," Dream groans, head thrown back. "Your mouth. *God*, you're almost pretty when you can't talk."

It shouldn't make George hard but it does. He can feel himself straining against his suit pants, taking everything with spit and wet pained lips wrapped around Dream's cock. The breath is being pushed out of his lungs, hot embers of helpless desperation making his head woozy because he wants this so much.

There are butterflies in his stomach and Dream is painting constellations in his mind. Nirvana has never been so broken.

He can feel exactly when Dream starts to get close just by the way his movements become erratic, when his cock twitches and he's gasping with so much need that George should be laughing.

Although he's not exactly in the position to gloat.

He half expects Dream to stop, finish in his mouth and paint George with his cum. But that doesn't happen. He's given a chance to feel too.

Dream's pulling out seems hasty. He wraps his palm around his own cock and taps the head on George's cheek a few times to smear pre-cum across his face, dirtying him up a little so he looks right against the surroundings. And George uses his sleeve to wipe it off because frankly that's disgusting. He doesn't need to be branded in such a lewd way.

"Fucking head pusher," George jabs when he can, sore throat and aching jaw.

Being pulled to his feet means he doesn't get much chance to adjust, and it's only mere seconds before Dream's lips are on his, the hard knocking of teeth against teeth blinding in unexplainable pleasure. They kiss like the world is burning, like this is their last few moments alive before incurable disease rips through the earth and sets them ablaze, and if this is how romance feels then George has never been as wooed in his life.

Because Dream kisses him with passion and that's so hard to find in the infection that is London.

"You're going to fuck me against the lockers?" George asks between kisses, breathless as he's

pushed back and his jacket is shrugged from his shoulders. “Don’t you have any class?”

“Shut up,” Dream scoffs. “I don’t exactly have a five-star hotel room around the block.”

“But I do.” George feels himself be shoved back, collapsing against the block behind him. “Don’t you want to fuck me in an actual bed?”

“No, you don’t deserve it.”

Blood tastes metallic and George loves the feeling on his tongue. He bites at Dream’s lips, keeping roughness to make sure they both know who they are.

“Fifty quid says you will,” he laughs.

And this is want. This is the perfect, scornful caricature of the underground that George has been chasing after ever since he turned 18. Dream’s kisses don’t taste like apricot, or cherry and he doesn’t smell like earth cologne and stacks of noted money. Instead he’s what George craves, addiction for split lips and black bruised eyes.

“You’re fucking insufferable,” Dream retorts.

George cackles. He fucking cackles, laughing in Dream’s face like he isn’t being pushed against locker doors and manhandled until he can’t fight against the grip. Hands touch his chest and they move to grab at his thighs, touching everything they can.

“This is expensive,” he snaps when Dream goes to break the buttons on his shirt. “Don’t pull.”

“You can buy a new one,” Dream reasons.

Quite simply, there’s no grace to his movements. There’s smeared blood on his lips and he’s tugging George’s clothes off to see all he can.

“Off,” George grumbles, pulling off his pants and making Dream do the same, until they’re both standing completely naked in the locker room, right in front of each other with the only option left to grab.

George’s cock is half hard without even being touched. There’s a small patch on his boxers that’s damp from pre-cum and that rising arousal. The fact that sucking Dream off managed to get him like this is pitiable, but George tries not to dwell on it too much, if he does he might remember where they actually are.

For a second, Dream steps away, grabbing a bag before coming back with a small tin in his hands, a little jar that he explains by simply saying, “Lube.”

There’s no position that George can think of to make this easier. In lieu of movement, Dream grabs his arm and shoves him around, pressing George’s chest to the lockers and pulling his hips back so he can grab. His fingers are slick and he doesn’t wait for approval, simply letting George’s high pitched gasps tell him if he’s doing something right.

“Fuck,” George mumbles.

Dream is spreading him apart—this is lewd.

Fingers are prodding against George’s hole. Dream is grabbing his ass and keeping him open, and his fingers are wet, almost dripping with lube, so George can’t help but flinch at the cold.

His forehead falls down, an arm coming up to hide his expression as Dream gets closer and lets the first finger start to press in, stretching George with just one slow motion. And George has done this to himself in the privacy of his own room before—fucked himself, with his wrist in a position that makes it cramp while his bones sting, and maybe he wanted it to be Dream working him open instead, but his imagination could never be as good as the real thing; Dream pumps one finger in and out of George's body like that's the only thing he knows how to do.

One finger George can take. It's slow and steady and despite their rushed approach, it's obvious that Dream doesn't *actually* want to hurt George. He tastes berries on his lips and bites down hard enough to try and draw blood. And that pain is pleasure; George's cock is aching at the tops of his legs.

"Yeah," Dream mutters. "Is that good?"

"Love your fingers," George admits. He can feel the second one get pressed against his rim, slowly trying to push in next to the other.

Warmth is rushing through his body, that second finger so much more than the first. Now, Dream uses his leverage to breathe soft against the shell of George's ear, letting out the smallest of noises as though he's the one being fingered and worked open in the modesty of a locker room.

Being caught like this wouldn't be the end for George, for Dream it would be, so George is selfish in the silent fact that the thought almost makes him excited. He lets Dream be rough, scissoring his fingers apart and stretching George open the best he can because the thought of Dream finally pushing in and fucking George until he's delirious is too good to let go of.

"Another," George orders.

His mouth is hanging wide. Three fingers are keeping him open and being fucked into him with such amazing precision. George is almost gagging for it. Control falls from his grasp despite how badly he wants to keep it, and he can feel pressure building in his stomach as he feels Dream's fingers jab to the side and finally make him weak.

"*There.*"

Dream's crooking his fingers against his prostate, making George's knees feel weak and his lips become loose. Soft, airy sounds slip from his throat, the pleasure that's shooting through him nothing short of bliss.

"*Dream,*" George gasps. "Oh fuck, I'm close."

He can't help but sound desperate when lips press to the back of his neck, sucking glazed hickey onto his skin. And he's so nearly there, the way that his orgasm starts to creep up on him almost catches him by surprise, but before he can get that far, the fingers inside of him are being pulled out, leaving him high and dry while he tries to find his breath. "*Dream.*"

George can practically feel the way chrome green eyes tear into his skin. Against his hands he feels filth, the way damp has made its way onto the roof and started to trail down all the rooms around, enough to make his skin crawl. And when Dream grips his arm and pulls his body around, not giving half a glance to the way George's cock is flushed pink and is leaking between their bodies, George thinks himself ready to scream.

"Jump," Dream orders, tapping on George's thigh to get them into the position they'd been in before.

Like this, George can feel everything. He can feel how hard Dream is, how big he is when he takes a slight step back and makes George fall, contorting him into a position where they can actually have sex. It ends with George being held by two hands on his lower back, lining him up while he can't easily reach forward and drag Dream into a kiss. And his neck is in an uncomfortable spot, head leaning against the lockers while Dream holds his thighs and George drags low cut nails up Dream's forearms.

"In, now," he bites through gritted teeth.

One second longer and he might implode.

"Don't be a bitch," Dream mutters.

There's need embedded in every slight movement that George makes. He tries to grind down, take what he wants for himself, but he's stopped by a vice grip on his waist, one that stops him from doing anything other than resting there, dependent on the other for pleasure.

"Dream, put it in before I hurt you," George practically whines.

He's giving up charm for a slight twang in his tone, doe eyes and an expression that no fighting man could resist.

"You wouldn't," Dream says, and he's not wrong but he definitely isn't right.

George is stuck somewhere between love and hate.

The head of Dream's cock catches on George's rim, taunting him with sheer size and the knowledge that there's more to come, and George breathes deep, biting his lip and trying not to let out a whimper too pathetic. In the end it's useless, George lets out the quietest of moans, feeling Dream slowly start to sink into him with the utmost control.

"Yeah? That good?"

"So good," George groans.

Obviously, he knew that Dream is strong, he's a boxer for fuck's sake, but the way he can hold George's whole weight while recovering from purple bruises and bleeding features is still impressive.

It's slow to start off with, Dream takes his precious time in letting George adjust, the feeling of being so full something he hasn't experienced in too long. And Dream's cock feels so good, filling him so perfectly and making him shake, thighs trembling on either side of Dream's waist.

There's something nice about waiting—the time where George can let his mouth drop into an 'o' and allow his thoughts to slowly come back. But at the same time, this isn't him and some pretty boy he found at the hunting club, this is him and *Dream*, standing in the underground while fucking and hoping that nobody will see.

"Fuck," Dream mumbles. His voice sounds weak—if George didn't know the situation, he'd think the voice belonged to a more soft spoken man.

All of his senses are heightened, George so ready for it already, but even after the moment's pause, Dream doesn't appear to do anything. He whines quietly, trying to shift and taunt Dream into finally fucking him like he wants but it doesn't seem to work. Dream just stands strong, holding George's hips and his waist and keeping the two of them grounded.

Like this, George is sure to snap. His neck hurts as it is, the position sure to be hell for his posture later, but right now he doesn't care too much about that fleeting pain and instead focuses on the dull ache that comes from his cock and the way Dream keeps him full without giving him what he needs.

Protesting is the only thing he can do. Groaning, George lets his lower lip quiver, pushing everything wanton onto his expression while Dream watches. And just when he's hooked, when his strength betrays him by faltering at George's false discomfort, George lets his expression harden, biting out a grating, "Stop being a bitch and fuck me."

That's enough to set Dream off though.

Almost instantly, he's pulling out nearly all the way, letting the head of his cock rest slightly in George's body before thrusting in so hard it'll cause the backs of slender thighs to bruise tomorrow.

It's so much to take. George can't do anything to stifle the moans that slip from his lips, rosy cheeks getting brighter when he realises how closely Dream is watching him, smiling at the way he's breathing hard and drowning in how good it feels

"That better?"

"Shit," is all that George can say.

Nodding might be pathetic but he does it anyway, letting Dream fuck him into oblivion with hard, strong thrusts that make his whole body shudder.

He might be squirming, legs shaking a little bit as they try to stay in place, but even as he tosses and turns in the other's grip, he doesn't feel afraid to fall. He knows he'd be caught if he did.

"*God*, your face," Dream murmurs. One hand comes up, off of George's waist and compromising their already dangerous position just to grab at his face and dig his thumbs into his cheeks, turning his head from side to side to get a good view of every angle. "Keep looking at me like you need it."

And one of Dream's fingers threatens to dip into George's mouth where it's being forced open, his lips being pushed apart by Dream's tight grip, but for whatever reason, Dream doesn't do it. Instead, he lets go with a laugh and puts all of his attention on fucking George with unfaltering determination.

"Knew you were a slut from the first time you walked in," Dream mocks, acid words dripping like melted sugar from his tongue. "Touching my arm like you wanted me to bend you over right there and then."

He fucks George so well, lets the gritty dirt of his word fall on his ears like they're sickly sweet instead. George loves every second, each disgustingly rough moment, because this is the best form of trust he'll ever know.

He lets out whiny breaths, unable to get more than a few words out at once, and the hitching of breath and how his cock is leaking against his stomach must be clear enough for Dream to know his state.

Still, it seems he wants to hear George speak. "You knew this would happen, didn't you?"

"Of course," George smiles. They're practically meant for each other—the disgustingly rich and

those who find wealth in filth, this is them and the sex is amazing. “I mean, with the way you were eye-fucking me, of course it did.”

At that, Dream grins. His hands squeeze the sides of George’s waist, thumbs dragging over his hip bones like he’s fascinated at the sight of the other’s body. And next to Dream, George’s frame looks like so much less, but that’s still something to stare at—George knows why he’d be wanted.

It’s pleasure in pain. George can feel his organs turning in on himself, his ribs too close together as the air is punched out of his lungs. The feeling spreads from his legs to his chest, flushing his face hot with pink and making the prettiest colour on the slopes of his collarbones.

Dream fucks George so impossibly deep, throwing his whole body into it and laughing when he finally angles it right and hits George’s prostate, fucking against it like it’s his mission to see George crumble.

And this is ecstasy, ecstasy nothing like George has ever known.

It’s the most scarring pleasure, the ferocity that makes him scramble to find something to grab onto, and Dream sees what he does and makes sure to stay pressed against that bundle of nerves, eliciting a gasp from the other when he pushes in and out on a whim.

“Slut,” he jabs when George defaults to a moan, whorish as his hair falls in front of his eyes and sticks to his forehead with sweat.

When he finally gets his mind back, George scoffs. “Whore.”

He’s silenced by another thrust where he wants it most. If they continue like this then it’ll never be over; George might just faint from how good he feels. His mind is fuzzy, thoughts are slow.

The only thing that George knows to do is whimper and let out a mumbled, “Close.”

Thankfully, Dream is in a similar state of dishevelment. “Me too,”

They aren’t trying to slow this down. It’s not like they’re wanting to share a sweet last kiss, exchanging rose petals and humility, but maybe in the back of George’s mind he’s thinking about what that would be like, telling himself he doesn’t need it and that Dream’s hips slamming against his skin is the only thing he’ll ever beg for.

“Can I?” Dream asks. His breathing is getting laboured, loud and so hot when it falls on George’s ears. “In you?”

“Fuck.” George is nodding, quick and rushed because *god* that’s what he’s wanted from day one—to walk around with a reminder of Dream always with him, the shape of his cock ruining George for anyone else. “In me.”

The thrusts are almost animalistic, George can feel every one and where they land. It’s so good, so urgent, and it makes George’s vision dusted, the stars in front of his eyes causing his state to be that much more apparent.

His cock almost hurts. It’s bobbing against his stomach, begging to be touched as every other part of George is taken care of, but even without that final laden graze, George can feel himself falling past the point of no return.

“Close,” George gasps. This is inevitable, his cock twitches against his chest as soon as Dream wraps a palm around him, a mix of spit and lube making the twist of his grip that much smoother.

“Dream.”

He’s being fucked to the same rhythm. Dream squeezes his hand around George to make sure he’s being driven into madness, a blur of the mind and no coherence in his words. Moans become a higher pitch as George feels himself start to tip over the edge, his orgasm leaving him blind as white hot pleasure rips through his body and makes his toes curl.

It seems to last forever. He can’t think, breathe. And George can feel himself clenching down around Dream’s cock just in time for Dream’s orgasm to catch him too, make his hips stutter as he starts to spill into George. His lower body twitches as he paints Dream’s hand. His head tips back, the abyss so calm as he rides out that perfect high with venom running through his veins.

Euphoria is so strong. There have been so many times where George has left sex unsatisfied, but right now he feels pornographic, like this tangled mess of limbs and red pleasure has changed him unequivocally as Dream fucks him shallow and does everything with greed.

“Fuck,” Dream groans.

He thrusts into George a few more times, any semblance of control fading as he lets himself fall with rapture, head dropping to the hollow of George’s chest where he lets his lips lie and tries not to sob. This can’t last forever but George wants it to. This can’t be the last time they ever do this.

Tiredness is coursing through him, it makes his bones so feeble and his head feel heavy, and as Dream slowly starts to pull out, he winces. He’s going to be so sore tomorrow, but it’ll be worth it. It always will be.

George’s legs feel like jelly.

There’s their release cooling in his stomach, his hands dirty and his body used.

He’s weak, slipping from Dream’s faltering grasp with thighs that tremble and renaissance hands that fumble and try to hold onto something. It’s quiet, empty. George can hear Dream training his breath as he finds the remains of tailored clothes on the floor and struggles to pull them on.

Vulnerability is what really shows in these silent moments. There’s no telling what this means to Dream, but George doesn’t even know what it means to him. Perhaps nothing, most likely everything.

Dream cuts through quiet with a sharpened blade.

“Go before the owners see you.”

George huffs out a laugh. Unbelievable. *“You’re kicking me out?”*

“Yeah,” Dream shrugs.

There’s a speck of dried blood on his chest, the beginnings of ashy purple bruises littering his stomach until he pulls on a t-shirt to hide it. He knows that George is watching—that golden amber eyes will never understand the filth that Dream lives in and the misfortune of an actual life down here in the pits of hell. But George will still pretend to understand.

He’ll grasp onto the charred thoughts that he’s been shown and make an uneducated guess about every situation he’s in.

“Fine,” George mutters. His legs hurt anyway, a nice bath and a warm meal at home would be

good for him nonetheless. “But don’t throw another match.” Sincere. They had sex, no need for mushy after talk. “You may be an illegal cage fighter but you’re not exactly dirt.”

And this room is cold.

In London, it tends to rain. George wears extra layers to avoid being caught out by the falling weather. Harsh, biting cold. It crawls past his legs and runs up his arms, sewn into the gold of his suit and threaded through each piece when he buttons up white and pretends he’s better than being taken apart in a room that doesn’t even have windows.

Dream stands in a shirt and black shorts. George wears a suit that’s been tailored to perfection. Homogeneity is a mere myth.

“I’ll think about it,” Dream says when the end comes. “Bye George.”

This side of London is still desperate, gripping. George doesn’t know how long it’ll last before the part of him that’s only ever known conformity starts to bite a little, but he’s here and this is not meant to last. Goodbyes aren’t meant to feel bad, especially when they aren’t forever.

“See you later, Dream.”

This is the beginning of the end.

End Notes

my twitter

[venus- ch1](#)

second chapter was recently deleted due to external reasons

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